



CALEXICO FIRE NEWSLETTER



DECEMBER 2017

'TIS THE SEASON FOR HOUSE FIRES

The incidence of candle fires is four times higher during December than during other months.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, four of the five most dangerous days of the year for residential fires are Christmas/Christmas Eve and New Year's/ New Year's Eve.

Holiday Fire Safety *Tips:*

As the holidays approach, the Fire Department is urging people to look for and eliminate potential dangers from holiday lights and decorations that could lead to fires and injuries. Each year, hospital emergency rooms treat thousands of people for injuries, such as falls, cuts, and shocks related to holiday lights, decorations, and Christmas trees. In addition, Christmas trees are involved in hundreds of fires each year, resulting in deaths, injuries, and property loss and damage.

Keep your family safe this holiday season by following these safety tips.

Trees

- When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant." Although this label does not mean the tree won't catch fire, it does indicate the tree will resist burning and should extinguish quickly.
- When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green; needles are hard to pull from branches and the trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin.
- When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces and radiators. Because heated rooms dry live trees out rapidly, be sure to keep the stand filled with water.

Lights

- Indoors or outside, only use lights that have been tested for safety by a recognized testing laboratory.
- Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, and throw out damaged sets.
- Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord.
- Turn off all lights when you go to bed or leave the house. The lights could short out and start a fire.

Fireplaces

- Do not remove fireplace embers or ash, or if you do, place them in a metal container with a lid and cover them with water. Do not place them in a plastic or paper bag or another container that is not fire-resistant. Do not dispose of them indoors or close to your home or another structure.
- Use care with "fire salts," which produce colored flames when thrown on wood fires. They contain heavy metals that can cause intense gastrointestinal irritation and vomiting if eaten. Keep them away from children.
- Do not burn wrapping papers in the fireplace. A flash fire may result as wrappings ignite suddenly and burn intensely.

CFD

Spotlight

DAMIAN GONZALEZ

This month meet Fire Captain Damian Gonzalez. With 24 years of service, Captain Gonzalez is one of the Department's senior Fire Captains.

Damian began his career as a Firefighter with the Calexico Fire Department in July of 1993. He obtained his Paramedic license in 1998 and since then he has moved through the ranks, promoting to Fire Engineer in 2004 and promoting to Fire Captain in 2008. Damian is one of the very few in the Fire Service that is privileged enough to say that he serves in the very same department that he started his career in.

Being born and raised in Calexico CA, he graduated from Calexico High School and attended Imperial Valley College taking General Education classes and majoring in Administration of Justice. In High School, Damian worked as a Lifeguard in the summers and attended Water Safety courses and always knew he wanted to work in a Public Service-oriented career. After High School, Damian also

attended Grossmont Community College in San Diego CA, where he lived for a few years before returning to his hometown. Initially, Damian was interested in obtaining a career with Law

Enforcement or Corrections before finding a love for the Fire Service that would direct him to the Calexico Fire Department and allow him to serve the citizens of his beloved hometown. This career has allowed Damian to pursue his passion for Public Safety and has been able to give back to his community through public service.

Damian's parents are also involved in giving back to the community and instilled the love and pride of giving back to the community of Calexico as they are also born and raised here. Damian is one of five brothers and sisters. He has two brothers and two sisters. Damian lives in Calexico with his wife, four sons one daughter and his four dogs. His five kids range from 14-25 years of age.

When Damian isn't serving the citizens of Calexico at work, He really enjoys spending time with his family either at home or going out and enjoying outdoor



activities, frequenting the desert and enjoying quality time with them. He also spends a good portion of his time working on home improvements as he feels spending time at home makes it more comfortable. Damian is a fan of watching football and is said to be a Die-hard Steelers fan by members of the Fire Department. Damian enjoys catching games with friends and co-workers alike.

Damian has always been very involved in the department both on and off duty. Damian is known to take a great deal of pride in doing his job as professionally as possible and always tries to inspire others to do the same. With 24 years of experience, Damian can be seen guiding and teaching his crew everything he has learned throughout his years with the Calexico Fire Department.

If you happen to see Captain Gonzalez out on the Fire Engine, don't forget to say hello.

Calexico Fire Department Hosts County Wide Disaster Drill.



On November 16th, The City of Calexico hosted the 2017 Statewide Medical and Health Exercise. This exercise was designed to test emergency services within the Imperial Valley as well as other agencies that would be working with emergency services during a large-scale incident. This exercise was designed to be a fully functional exercise, not a simulation, and it was



designed to specifically "stress" the system to identify strengths and weaknesses. The scenario included volunteers who acted as injured patients and bystanders, as well as volunteers who played to role of suspects and assailants. The Calexico Mission School was designated as one of the locations to

be used for the exercise.

Principal Oscar Olivarría, his staff, and students were all a great help during the exercise and their willingness to participate in this exercise was greatly appreciated by the Calexico Fire Department and the Imperial County Emergency Medical Services Agency.



The exercise focused on the steps that would have to be taken to successfully mitigate a large-scale incident in the event something like this would ever happen. Fire Departments

train and are involved in taking care of incidents daily, with large-scale incidents of this nature happening less frequent. Although this type of incident is not the norm, the need to train and be ready for these types of calls is a reality nowadays. Training with multiple departments and different agencies proved invaluable as it brought worse case scenarios to light that otherwise might have been missed in a simple tabletop simulation. It was a sight to see all the different agencies working together and making this exercise a success. This exercise

lasted a few hours. The exercise proved to be true to its intentions and just minutes before the exercise was to begin, 2 separate actual 911 calls were received by Calexico dispatchers causing the exercise to

be modified within the last 2 minutes. Adapt and overcome!

THE SCENARIO: Multi-site Terror Attack

Scenario 1: A protest in the downtown area that turned fatal after a vehicle was used to attack a



crowd of protestors. Many patients were involved and had to be triaged and treated, including simulating transporting patients to El Centro Regional Medical Center. The hospital used people acting as

victims and patients at their location at the same time to simulate receiving patients from the protest. As this scenario is continuing, scenario #2 would overlap and begin its challenge.



County Wide Disaster Drill continued...



Scenario 2: Two individuals from the protest site walk over to the Calexico Mission School and pretend to try and locate their missing children. Upon entering the school, these individuals withdrew semi-automatic weapons and begin firing within the school grounds causing multiple casualties and fatalities. The departments and agencies on the scene now must control and mitigate the 1st as well as the 2nd incident.



One unique facet during this portion of the exercise was the ability to utilize El Centro Fire Department's Law Enforcement First Responder (LEFR) training. This is a training where first responders are taught basic tactical casualty care. Calexico Fire is currently attempting to implement this into our policy and procedures.

Again, this exercise was designed to "stress" the system and it did. It helped identify some key points where all departments could take home areas to work on, clarify, and

strengthen. It also identified It had been close to 20 years since an exercise of this size had taken place and upon completion of this training one thing was discovered, all the different agencies ultimately worked very well together. Thank you to



The Calexico Mission School, Imperial County Fire, El Centro Fire, Holtville Fire, Gold Cross Ambulance Services, U.S. Border Patrol, Calexico PD, Westmorland Fire, El Centro Regional Medical Center, Pioneers Memorial Hospital, FBI, Imperial County Emergency Services Agency and the multiple county agencies who also participated.



Station Life

FROM KINDER TO COLLEGE – BACK AT THE STATION

I guess if you would've been able to ask Veronica around 23 years ago if she could see herself back at this Calexico Fire station later in her life, you'd probably get a totally different answer then than what she would give today. Fortunately, we don't have to guess, we were able to ask her during a conversation while she was here doing her EMT ride-a-long time here on November 10th of this year. You see, the last time 29-year-old Veronica Huerta set foot in the Calexico Fire Station was when she was in kindergarten. That's right, kindergarten! You know what's even better? She was visiting the department during a school tour of the fire department!!! We thought that was pretty cool!



Veronica pretty much grew up in Calexico attending Dool Elementary, De Anza Junior High, Calexico High School, and IVC. One of the things that are evident with Veronica is that she is a driven individual and she came to the department with the right attitude: wanting to learn, wanting to experience the calls, and wanting to leave with more knowledge that she arrived with. Veronica is a planner and has short and long-term goals. Her short terms goals (5 years) are to complete

her EMT course and pass her state exams, become a Certified Nursing Assistance, become a Registered Nurse, and complete a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. By the way, she just got accepted into the nursing program

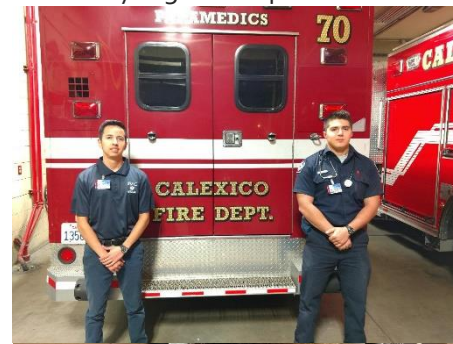
Her long-term goals are to create a mobile clinic for the homeless where health services not readily available for them, can be made accessible. Veronica also aspires to create a teen health and wellness outreach program where a variety of services can be offered to the youth of the Imperial Valley. We chose to talk a



little about Veronica just because of her two visits to our department, we thought it was worth a share! We'd like to think our department maybe had a little impact on her adult aspirations! We hope you all wish Veronica continued success on her goals as much as we do!



Note: The Calexico Fire Department is a teaching department and works with the Imperial Valley College on several different levels. We assist qualified personnel who need field time and sign off experience on ambulance time and skills to include Imperial Valley College EMT's, EMT-Advanced, Border Patrol's BORSTAR, and Mobile Intensive Care Nurses (MICN). We also participate heavily in the college's Paramedic program where we take on Paramedic Interns for (22) 24-hours shifts as Preceptors and help train, test, teach, and evaluate them on all the skills and book knowledge that they have learned and show them how to apply that knowledge to the streets. This is one of their last steps in becoming a state and nationally registered paramedic.

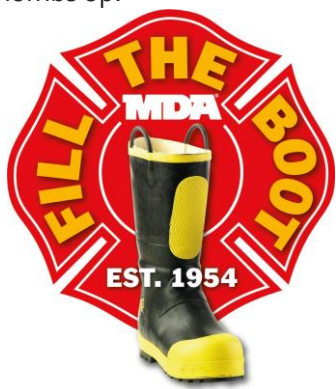


“Fill the Boot Drive” With Calexico Firefighters

November brought us MDA's Fill the Boot Drive. Calexico Firefighters came out Saturday, November 11th between 8am-12 noon to raise money for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. For more than 60 years Firefighters everywhere have made it a tradition to stand out and get the public involved in donating money for a great cause. The iconic picture of a Firefighter standing with a boot gathering your donations has not only been an amazing representation of what it means to give back, but it has had a tremendously positive effect on the development in finding a cure for Muscular Dystrophy. Firefighters have played a major role for Muscular Dystrophy and in the last year, three promising new drugs received FDA approval. Because of your support, three new drugs for neuromuscular diseases have been recently approved, and more are expected in the next five years than in the past five decades. These treatments are life-changing for MDA families.

Your Calexico Firefighters raised \$937.39 thanks to your support. We will continue to support and participate in this age-old tradition of giving back to those in need.

We appreciate everyone coming out and donating or just giving us thumbs up.



On Scene

Sunday November 26th around 8pm, Crews were called for a structure fire on the 900 block of Fifth Street. Calexico Firefighters battled a house fire that was fully involved and stopped exposures from running into the next structure. No Off-duty response was activated.



On November 7th at approximately 10am, Calexico Fire Department Engine 3821 was dispatched to a four-alarm fire in Salton City for multiple dwellings that were fully involved. Calexico Fire assisted other departments in fighting this fire. No injuries were reported.



On the Lighter Side



OFF DUTY RULE: NEVER LET A TRUCKIE CARVE THE TURKEY!

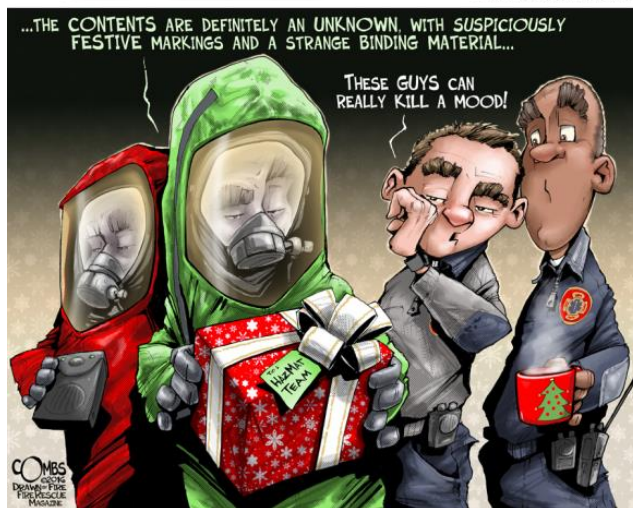


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BY PAUL COMBS



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